FAULKNER STUDIES

Winter, 1954
Vol. III, No. 4

$2.00 yearly
.50 a copy

Jealousy[1]

WILLIAM FAULKNER

"Knitting again, eh?"

His wife raised her smooth, oval face and her soft eyes for a moment met his, then dropped to her work again. "As you see, caro mio."

"Knitting! Always knitting! Is it that there is nothing to be done here that you must knit at all times?"

She sighed, but made no reply.

"Well?" he repeated, "cannot you speak? Have you lost your tongue?" he finished roughly.

"But it was you, 'Tono mio," she replied without raising her head, "who insist that I sit here instead of in my little red room, as I desired."

"Bah! Someone is needed here; would you have me pay wages to one that you might sit all day like a great lady, knitting with your gossips?"

A waiter, a tall young Roman god in a soiled apron, came between them and placed upon the deck a ticket and a bill. The woman made the change and gave the waiter a brief glance. He looked into her husband's face—a level stare in which his white satirical smile flashed, and withdrew. The other man's hand knotted into a fist upon the desk and he stared at his whitening knuckles as at something new and strange, cursing in a whisper. His wife raised her head and regarded him coldly.

"Don't be a fool, Antonio."

He controlled his voice by an effort. "How much longer will this continue?"

"Ah, that is what I would ask you: how much longer are you to vent your ill humor upon me?"

1. Reprinted from Sunday Magazine, New Orleans **Times-Picayune,** March 1, 1925.

"You, with your demure face," he whispered fiercely, his hot little eyes blazing with bafflement and suddent rage.

She looked quickly about them. "Hush," she said, "people are looking. What do you want? Shall I withdraw to my room?"

His face was dreadful. "No," he shouted at last. He lowered his choking voice and continued: "I will not have it, do you hear?" He lowered his voice still more. "Listen, I will kill you, as I love God."

She picked up her knitting once more. "Don't be a fool," she repeated. "Return to your duties—see, patrons arrive. You are insane."

"Insane or not, do not drive me too far."

"You are insane: you talk, you scream, you curse—what?"

"You know well what."

"I? Have I ever given you cause or reason to go on so? Of what do you accuse me? Have I not been a good wife to you? Have I not at all times observed your wishes? You know well that I do not sit here night after night of my own wishes, of my own desires. This jealousy of yours is driving you mad."

"Bah! Be warned. That is all I say."

His gaze roamed from table to table as he sulked in his dirty apron, lurking among anaemic potted palms or serving his strange customers with servile insolence, and replying in snappish monosyllables to the greetings of old patrons. The tall, handsome waiter moved swiftly and deftly about, courteous and efficient. The husband compared the young man's supple grace with his own bulky figure and a fire gnawed in him. Once more the waiter approached the desk, his glance sweeping down the room rested briefly upon the husband's face, as he leaned intimately toward the wife.

The husband found himself walking in a red daze toward the two of them. He could not hear his own footfalls nor feel the floor beneath

Faulkner Studies

Faulkner Studies is published quarterly. All manuscripts should be addressed to **Faulkner Studies,** Box 102, University Station, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota. Manuscripts must be accompanied by an addressed envelope and sufficient postage to cover their return. Subscription rates: $2.00 yearly.

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his feet. The waiter moved away as he approached, and his wife again sat bent above her knitting. Upon the desk was a china receptacle containing toothpicks; as he leaned upon the desk his fingers closed about the toothpick holder. The thing burst in his clenched hand amid a spurt of wooden splinters and a thin line of crimson was suddenly between the fingers and across the back of his hand.

"What did he say to you?" he asked; his voice to him seemed dry and light, like a broken egg shell.

The woman raised her head and her gaze met his full. Her eyes grew suddenly large, as though they would take up her whole face. "Listen," she said calmly, "you are insane. What would you have? Was it not you who put me here? I did not choose this." Her voice gathered warmth, "Am I to have no peace whatever? For six months now this has continued; day and night you have fretted and nagged at me; but now it must end. Either you come to your senses, or I leave you and return to my people. Take your choice: it is for you to make. But remember, this is the end. I have been a good wife to you, and I will still be if you but become again as you once were. But one more scene like this tonight, and I leave you."

He turned and walked away like a drunk man, or a somnambulist. He passed the waiter and the other's white, meaningless smile brought him to himself. He beckoned abruptly to the other and passed on through the kitchen and into a dark passage giving on an alley, where he waited, trembling. The waiter followed; in the constructed, shadowy place the other loomed above him, standing easily like a swordsman, looming above him though he was the bulkier man. Starlight was about them, and a faint wind stirred in the dingy alley.

"See," he said and his voice shook, "I know all; what is there between you?"

"Do you question me?" replied the other man.

"I will know: what is there between you?"

"There is nothing between us save the knowledge that you are crazy."

"Do not lie to me!"

" 'Lie?' This, to me? Do you give me the lie?" The younger man's body sprang like a poised sword, his fire seemed to make light the walls. The other quailed before him despite himself, cursing himself for his cowardice.

"But I must know! I will go mad!"

"You are already mad. Had you not been I should have killed you ere this. Listen, tub of entrails, there is nothing between us: for her sake whom you persecute, I swear it. I have said no word to her that you have not seen, nor she to me. If she be attracted to someone, it is not I. This I tell you because I am sorry for her, sorry for any woman who must be daily plagued by such as you."

"But what did you say to her but now, tonight?"

The young man slapped him, rocking his head upon his shoulders with two blows. The other staggered back "I will kill you!" he screamed.

"You do not dare!" snapped the waiter, "you do not dare, save from behind. And what will the world say, if you do? Can you bear to have your wife call you coward? But I do not put this beyond you, hence I shall be on guard. And if you make the attempt, let it be successful, or God help you! Dog, and son of dogs!"

Alone again, the husband leaned against the cold alley wall panting, cursing in his rage and fear and hate. It was true; he did not dare. And he stared at the starred sky stretching like taut silk above the walled well of the alley, watching the same stars at which he had gazed in far-away Sicily in his youth, when he had been a boy and life was clear and fine and simple; and that lads would stare wondering upon long after he and his dream and his problem were quiet underground.

He did not dare! The idea of assassination occurred to him, but he knew that he could not face himself afterward; his wife, that woman who had caused it all, whom he had taken but recently from her father's house and who was dearer to him than the world, than life itself, would never forgive him. He was almost middle-aged, and ugly and fat, while she, she was still young, and pretty. Was it any wonder that men were attracted to her as he had been? Was it any wonder that men should pause at her dusky oval face, her red mouth and raven hair, her black, black hair? And she—had she ever encouraged them? No! She had been a good wife to him, as she had said.

To go away, that was the answer—to take her to a new city; among new people they might yet live a second honeymoon. That was what he would do. He raised his face again to the heedless flying stars among which his problem had got so interwoven and tangled; allowing the cool night air to play in his sweat-matted hair, and drew a long breath. That was the solution.

His wife agreed almost at once. They discussed the matter with her people and overcame their objections. She had informed her parents

from time to time of his growing malady, so their decision did not surprise them. He was industrious and, until his present obsession took him, kind—a good husband in their eyes: too good to lose.

Once the decision made, he became his normal self again. In fact, things went so smoothly that he would have reconsidered, but his wife was firm. So a purchaser for the restaurant was found in the person of the tall young waiter. Relations between the two men were still strained and the older man avoided the other. Whenever they were forced to meet the younger acted as though nothing had happened. His white, sinister smile was the same as ever, yet the flash of his teeth in his dark face had somehow the power to enrage the other, stirring again in him old angers and fears he had thought asleep. But the waiter was more pleasant and courteous than ever; he insisted upon presenting the signora with a parting gift, with such a polite insistence that they could not refuse. And so at last, one day at noon, the two men set out to choose the gift.

A string of glass beads, or a medallion, the young man wanted. And they entered a curio shop where such things were sold—an orderless jumble of pictures, vases, bric-a-brac, jewelry, firearms and brass. While the waiter examined and haggled over his prospective purchase the older man stood idly near by. The purchaser stood near a window, a string of beads looping from his raised hand, oblivious and defenseless. And it occurred to the other that, for the first time the two of them had been together in the same room, his enemy was completely at his mercy. And while his hand groped behind him among a litter of ancient weapons his caution rebuked him for the thought. This had all been settled; he was going away tomorrow, perhaps never to see the man again. But it would be so easy! was the reply. Just to pretend that this old pistol fitting snugly in my palm were a modern, a deadly machine —like this: and he slowly raised the rusted weapon while his thumb broke loose the hammer, and the spring which had slept for thirty years gathered itself. Like this! he whispered, aiming at the unconscious man he had once wanted to kill; and pulled the trigger.

The tiny room roared with sound and a lance of red flame leaped out like a sword. The young waiter crashed forward into a table of glassware, then to the floor; and the other man stood screaming with the burst pistol in his hand until a policeman plunged through the door.

For these two stories in a hard cover edition, write to McCosh's Book Shop, 1405 S.E. 5th Street, Minneapolis, Minn.

Episode[1]

WILLIAM FAULKNER

Every day at noon they pass. He in a brushed suit and a gray hat, never collarless nor tieless, she in a neat cotton print of dress and a sunbonnet. I have seen her any number of times, sitting and rocking upon wooden porches before the crude, shabby cottages among my own hills in Mississippi.

They are at least sixty. He is blind and his gait is halting and brittle. Talking in a steady stream, gesturing with her knotty hand, she leads him daily to the cathedral to beg; at sunset she returns for him and takes him home. I had not seen her face until Spratling from the balcony called to her. She looked to both sides and then behind her without discovering us. At Spratling's second call she looked up.

Her face is brown, and timeless and merry as a gnome's and toothless: her nose and chin know each other.

"Are you in a hurry?" he asked.

"Why?" she replied brightly.

"I'd like to sketch you."

She watched his face keenly, not comprehending.

"I'd like to make a picture of you," he explained.

"Come down," she replied promptly, smiling. She spoke to the man with her and he obediently tried to sit down upon the narrow concrete base of the garden fence. He fell heavily and a passer-by helped her raise him to his feet. I left Spratling feverishly seeking a pencil and descended with a chair for him, and I saw that she was actually trembling—not with age, but with pleased vanity.

"Assis, Joe," she ordered, and he sat down, his sightless face filled with that remote godlike calm known only to the blind. Spratling with his sketch pad appeared. She took her place beside the seated man with her hand to his shoulder; one knew immediately that they had been photographed so on their wedding day.

She was a bride again; with that ability for fine fabling which death alone can rob us of, she was once more dressed in silk (or its equivalent) and jewels, a wreath and a veil, and probably a bouquet. She was a bride again, young and fair, with her trembling hand on young Joe's

1. Reprinted from Sunday Magazine, New Orleans **Times-Picayune,** August 16, 1925.

shoulder; Joe beside her was once more something to shake her heart with dread and adoration and vanity—something to be a little frightened of.

A casual passer-by felt it and stopped to look at them. Even blind Joe felt it through her hand on his shoulder. Her dream clothed him, too, in youth and pride; he too assumed that fixed and impossible attitude of the male and his bride being photographed in the year 1880.

"No, no," Spratling told her, "not like that." Her face fell. "Turn toward him, look at him," he added quickly.

She obeyed, still facing us.

"Turn your head too; look at him."

"But you can't see my face then," she objected.

"Yes, I can. Besides, I'll draw your face later."

Appeased, her smile broke her face into a million tiny wrinkles, like an etching, and she took the position he wanted.

At once she became maternal. She was no longer a bride; she had been married long enough to know that Joe was not anything to be either loved or feared very passionately, but on the contrary he was something to be a little disparaging of; that after all he was only a large, blundering child. (You knew that she had borne children by now—perhaps lost one.) But he was hers and another world would be as bad probably, so she would make the best of it, remembering other days.

And Joe, again taking her mood through her hand on his shoulder, was no longer the dominating male. And he too, remembering other days when he had come to her for comfort, took her new dream. His arrogance dissolved from him and he sat quiet under her touch, helpless yet needing no help, sightless and calm as a god who has seen both life and death and found nothing of particular importance in either of them.

Spratling finished.

"Now the face," she reminded him quickly. And now there was something in her face that was not her face. It partook of something in time, in the race, ambiguous, enigmatic. Was she posing? I wondered, watching her. She was facing Spratling, but I don't believe her eyes saw him, nor the wall behind him. Her eyes were contemplative, yet personal—it was as if someone had whispered a sublime and colossal joke in the ear of an idol.

Spratling finished, and her face became the face of a woman of sixty, toothless and merry as a gnome's. She came over to see the sketch, taking it in her hands.

"Got any money?" Spratling asked me.

I had fifteen cents. She returned the picture without comment and took the coins.

"Thank you," she said. She touched her husband and he rose. "Thank you for the chair," she nodded and smiled at me, and I watched them move slowly down the alley, wondering what I had seen in her face—or had I seen anything at all. I turned to Spratling. "Let's see it."

He was staring at the sketch. "Hell," he said. I looked at it. And then I knew what I had seen in her face. The full-face sketch had exactly the same expression as the Mona Lisa.

Ah, women who have but one eternal age! And that is no age.

Moral Awareness in "Dry September"

WILLIAM B. BACHE

In order to understand Faulkner's "Dry September," we have to start with the workable premise that the emphasis of the story is on, as Robert Gorham Davis has suggested, "causes of violence, on the mental and physical atmosphere which breeds lynchings." This is not to underestimate, for one thing, the importance of the murder, which, if the distinction may be made, is the center of the story; it is simply to put it in perspective. Truly understanding the story is rewarding, for in "Dry September" we are able to see how an incident becomes transmuted into an artistic achievement: our concern is not with what the story was but with what the story has become. We have to understand Faulkner's talent to appreciate Faulkner's genius, and here we have a chance to savor his devastating irony, to watch his handling of symbols, to trace his mastery of technique, and, finally, to know his moral awareness.

Led by the hot-headed McLendon, who disregards Hawkshaw's mild manner and rejects Hawkshaw's voice of reason, the men, urged on, as it were, by hotness and dryness, irrationally push an unsubstantial rumor to an evil conclusion. Except for the actual murder of the innocent Mayes, little "good" is really accomplished by the violence: the Negroes are perhaps a little less seen, a little more frightened; it is still hot and dry. How foolish and fruitless and futile it all is. Yet what happens ought not to be unexpected. For what Minnie and McLendon do only follows from their training; it just puts the seal on their descendancy. As a girl Minnie was a little brighter and louder flame than her friends; now she wastes away: in the mornings she sits uselessly on

the front-porch swing; in the afternoons, after resting from the heat of the day, she goes with her lady friends to the various stores to handle the goods and to haggle over prices but to buy nothing; in the evenings she goes with the neighbor women to the moving pictures. As a young man McLendon led troops at the front in France and was decorated for valor; now, unlovingly married to a chastened wife, he dominates the men and bullies the town. "Dry September" can be called the story of the middle age of Minnie and McLendon, the story of the profitless autumn of their discontent.

Minnie's bright eyes, bright face, and bright dresses underline her bright, haggard look, which she carries like a mask or a flag, "with that bafflement of furious repudiation of truth in her eyes." Now that the flame of youth has gone out, this brightness catches her hollow animation and hints at the brittle viciousness and hopeless sterility of her life. Significantly, Minnie's girl friends with their bright eyes and bright voices are also "bright." Their feverish eyes are symptomatic of frustration and spiritual malaise. This, then, is the climate of Minnie's well-populated world: her feminine world of frustration is expressed as vapidity and selfishness. The relationship of Minnie and her world to McLendon and his world is that of brightness to hotness: McLendon's masculine world of frustration is expressed as rashness. This world is labeled and motivated by McLendon's hot eyes: by infecting the other men, this hotness wilfully disregards truth and actually causes the murder.

Behind Minnie's feminine world and McLendon's masculine world lies the world of movies and cheap fiction, which consistently comments on the action in much the same way that the "movie world" of Hemingway's "The Killers" comments on the action of that story. In a sense, then, just as Minnie is the "heroine" of a romantic film, so McLendon is the "hero" of a melodrama, "poised on the balls of his feet, roving his gaze." "Dry September" is a parody of the Hollywood movie in which the honor of the beautiful young girl is avenged by the handsome, virile hero. And at the picture show when Minnie sees the young paired couples coming between her and the silver glare—another brightness—of the movie screen, she is finally brought to hysteria by the sudden realization that unrecapturable youth stands between her and the beautiful but hollow and false, furiously unreal life unfolding on the screen. Telling the story in a series of scenes with a fairly long list of characters, roughly the written equivalent of the movie manner, is only the most important clue to this unreal world in the story. There are

more. The client in the barber chair "looked like a desert rat in the moving pictures." And, as pointed out by Robert Gorham Davis, Hawkshaw is the name of the indefatigable detective in Tom Taylor's popular melodrama, *The Ticket of Leave Man.*

Throughout the story the harsh, unpleasant sound of hissing is heard: going like a fire in dry grass, the rumor can be said to have hissed; while striking the Negro, the white men emit their breath in a dry hissing; while remarking on the absence of the Negroes from the square, the white men make sounds like sighs of hissing exultation; coming between Minnie and the movie screen, the boys and girls are sibilant; while taking care of Minnie at the end of the story, the girls make the hissing sound "Shhhhh." The hissing rumor, started by Minnie (she is the flame that started the fire) and directed at Mayes, comes back, as it were, to mock her. Now the presence in the story of so much hissing, which obviously can represent Satan or evil, may lead us to contend that the story of the Garden of Eden is a metaphorical parallel to "Dry September." Be that as it may. The setting of the story is certainly hellish: the dryness, the heat, the dust, the dead air, and the various references to Hell attest to that. And Will Mayes is a counter-symbol to the cursed land, to the physically and spiritually dry September: his cool, wet job is that of night watchman at an ice plant.

Although, or perhaps because, Will Mayes is a name, a symbol, he is the focal point, the crucial character of the story; his name indicates the way the various levels of the story come finally to rest on him. One homonym of his surname, *maize,* represents the only product reaped in this dry September; the other homonym, *maze,* seems to stand for the intricate labyrinthine problem of the Negro in the South: since Mayes is the only Negro actually seen in the story, he may be considered *the* Negro. But several hints imply that the ultimate intent is more than skin-deep: the name *W*ill *M*ayes is "initially" that of a *W*hite *M*an; Minnie's sometime friend, the cashier of the bank, is a high-colored man; during an altercation McLendon and sand-colored Hawkshaw look like men of different races. The Christian name, Will, implies his ultimate significance. From this, is it too much to say that Will Mayes is the symbolic conscience, lost in the welter of unreality, rashness, and frustration, of the McLendons and the Minnies? Looking for the Negro in the darkness, McLendon shouts, "Will! . . . Will!" But the subsuming importance of Will Mayes is perhaps best understood if we consider him to be Christ. Consistently throughout "Dry September" Christ and God ("by God," "for God's sake," " 'fore God") are mentioned. Fur-

ther, Mayes is a martyr to the white world represented by Minnie and McLendon.

We are told at the beginning of the story that the rumor, that hissing discord which, by identifying evil, binds the story together, went "through the bloody September twilight." The rumor fits into this twilight of violent implications. Yet in the scene in which Mayes is beaten and Hawkshaw jumps from the automobile (the only violence actually depicted in the story), there is present a new and somewhat unexpected rumor, "a rumor of the twice-waxed moon"— a rumor not heard but seen, not mundane but ultramundane—a rumor that dispels the twilight bloodiness by a "wan hemorrhage." The hissing, bloody rumor is momentarily hushed by the silent, pale one; and the last line of the story, "The dark world seemed to lie stricken beneath the cold moon and the lidless stars," indicates the victory of the moon-rumor and marks the moral progress of the story.

Now, since both Mayes and the moon are "night watchmen" and since the moon rises above the eternal dust at about the same time that Mayes is put into the bottomless pit, can we not say that the moon stands for Mayes after his death, represents Christ's rising to Heaven after the crucifixion, represents the moral ascendancy of Mayes over his betrayer and his murderers?

The thematic, rather than the symbolic, importance of Mayes is largely made clear by the realization that Mayes, who is at once the hero and the scapegoat of the story, and Minnie reverse roles: Mayes is the object of the first rumor and the originator of the second; Minnie is the originator of the first rumor and the object of the second. Though Minnie is not directly affected by the moon, the symbolic equivalent of Mayes, she is brought to hysteria, she is brought low by the silver glare of the moving pictures, which may be read as the "bright" equivalent of the moon—both silver, both "romantic." Like Judas, she is "rewarded" for her treachery with silver. When the ice, obviously representing Mayes, is applied to Minnie's head, she is quieted only briefly; then the laughter wells up again and she begins to scream.

The only significant difference between the early "Dry September," which appeared in *Scribner's,* and the final version is in the name of the chief murderer. The change from Plunkett to McLendon brings him verbally into line with the other *M's* of the story—Mayes, Minnie, moon, moving pictures—and this change helps to clarify the relationship McLendon has to the insight. He is truly Minnie's counterpart. At

first McLendon is "hysterical" and Minnie is lonely; after the murder McLennon is "lonely" and Minnie is hysterical. They have exchanged one misery for another and are much worse off for the exchange. They have progressed within a physical hell and into a moral hell. At the end of the story McLendon, hot and perspiring, in his white and green, though unfertile, birdcage of a house, finds himself, at the advent of Sunday, rebuked by the dark world that lies stricken beneath the cold moon and the lidless stars.

Purdue University

A Note on Our New Policy

Starting with the next issue, *Faulkner Studies* will change its name to *Critique: Studies in Modern Fiction.* In an effort to widen the scope of the magazine, the editors have decided to publish not only articles on William Faulkner, but in addition, essays on other modern writers and various aspects of contemporary fiction. The first issue, to be published at the end of May, will be devoted to considerations of the work of Caroline Gordon by Harry Duncan, Andrew Lytle, William Van O'Connor, Danforth Ross, and others. It will also contain a bibliography of her works, as well as a bibliography of existing critical writing on her novels and stories. The greater number of our issues will deal in this way with one writer, while other issues will be general in nature, including essays on various writers, and problems, of modern fiction. We think that *Critique,* as the first published magazine devoted exclusively to fiction, will find a wide audience among the increasing number of those interested in modern fiction.

Critique will be published three times a year: the format will be new and the size considerably larger than that of *Faulkner Studies.* Although individual copies will now cost $.75, subscription rates will remain at $2.00 yearly.

Reviews

Thompson, Lawrance, "Mirror Analogues in *The Sound and the Fury,*" *English Institute Essays,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1954, pp. 83-106.

Thompson's essay is a development of the idea that Faulkner has employed the principle of the mirror "as a means of reflecting various kinds of correspondences, antitheses, parallelisms, analogues—even as a means of illuminating certain thematic concerns" in *The Sound and the Fury*. One use of the device is the appearance of the mirror itself in the Benjy and Quentin sections. For Benjy, the mirror is a means of multiplying his enjoyment of certain life-sustaining objects, and hence a way of asserting "positive values" in life. Quentin uses the mirror to multiply the life-destroying, negative values which he himself seems to embody; for example, he contemplates the reflection of "his own death-obsessed face." In addition, Thompson suggests several figurative uses of the mirror principle: Benjy acts as a "moral mirror" for the members of the Compson family and present action "mirrors" the meaning of past action. The structure of the entire novel is like that of "hinged and contiguous haberdashery mirrors" which reflect variously what Thompson considers an essential theme of *The Sound and the Fury,* the antithesis between "order-producing" and "chaos-producing" forces in human experience. Although this thematic concept is certainly relevant to the novel, one tends to question Thompson's classification of Benjy as an "order-producing" human being who represents "the effects of compassionate and self-sacrificial love." Benjy's mind would appear to be, rather, an eminent symbol of chaos and disorder, and his emotions characteristic of a species of self-love.

In general, Thompson's use of the mirror analogue is an effective metaphorical device for his own interesting analysis of the themes and structure of the book; one is not convinced, however, of the importance of the mirror concept as a structural device in the novel. N. M. G.

Collins, Carvel, "The Interior Monologues of *The Sound and the Fury*," *English Institute Essays,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1954, pp. 29-56.

In this essay, Carvel Collins discusses two external structural systems of *The Sound and the Fury* and indicates their relationship to James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Just as Joyce directed his reader's attention to the *Odyssey,* Faulkner, by the title, points up the relationship between his novel and *Macbeth*. The second structural system is inspired by the Joycean use of human anatomy, but is based, rather, on human personality as interpreted by Freud. Collins says, "I submit that the interior monologue of Benjamin the idiot draws on Freud's concept of

the id, the monologue of Quentin the suicide drawns on Freud's concept of the ego, and the monologue of he censorious Jason draws on Freud's concept of the super-ego." Benjy, in reflecting the id, is selfish, jealous, and noxiously aggressive. Jason operates as the super-ego in its limiting capacity when he takes over his parents' controlling functions and behaves in a completely ruthless fashion. And Quentin, ego-like, is subject to three masters—the id, the outer world, and the super-ego. It has been suggested that the super-ego often succeeds in driving the weak ego, unable to act, into death; this helps to explain Quentin's ultimate suicide.

I believe that at times Mr. Collins tends to overstate his case. In describing Jason as a figure drawn from Freud's concept of the super-ego, he puts the emphasis on Jason's repressive acts rather than on the sadism which motivates them. And as Freud has observed in discussing the relationship between cruelty and the sexual instinct, "in the explanation of this connection no one has gone beyond the accentuation of the aggressive factors of the libido." Although there is this shortcoming, on the whole Mr. Collins has made an intriguing and perceptive analysis of the superstructure of Faulkner's novel. G. J. G.

Robert Penn Warren and the Myth of the Garden

ROBERT WHITE

Although it is in his recent long narrative poem, *A Brother to Dragons,* that Robert Penn Warren has most explicitly examined some of the attitudes and cherished beliefs of Americans toward their own past, such a concern has been prominent in much of his earlier poetry and in the greater part of his fiction. In large measure, much of his poetry and fiction has been directed toward an examination of what Henry Nash Smith has termed the "myth of the garden." Of course, many American writers have been concerned with the past, have found notable ideals in the past, and have compared that past with their present. But Warren has been quite unlike most other writers in his treatment of the American experience.

Generally speaking, one might say that the story of modern American literature is a double story. A story of an attempt to idealize the past, the past in which society was predominantly rural and agrarian and supposedly more moral and virtuous and democratic; and the story of a disillusioned and despairing outcry against modern industrial

society, which supposedly has done away with the American dream and promise, which has blasted the innocence and hope that were our before the advent of the twentieth century. Such idealization and disillusionment may be found not only in such mediocre writers as Thornton Wilder and Stephen Benet, but in such writers as Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. The anguished cry of betrayal is perhaps most poignantly expressed in the final passage of *The Great Gatsby,* when Nick Carraway stands in the moonlight and becomes aware "of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes—a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams."

Warren sees the green breast of the new world differently. He speaks of the "heyday of hope and heart's extravagance," when the settlers poured over the Appalachians into the fertile river valleys of Kentucky, as a time

> When Grab was watchword and earth spread her legs
> Wide as she could, like any jolly trollop
> Or bouncing girl back in the bushes after
> The preaching or the husking bee, and said,
> "Come git it, boy, hit's yourn, but git it deep!"

Americans have rarely chosen to think of the rich and fertile earth as a jolly trollop. They have rather chosen to personify the land in the flowing garb and stately manner of a Ceres. Or they have thought of the land, the virgin land of the forest, as an unfulfilled vision or as Frederick Jackson Turner's life-giving cradle of democracy. Such images of the land are deep at the core of what may be called the American faith, the American mythology.

Much of Warren's poetry and fiction is concerned with two of the most persistent and dominant elements in this mythology—the belief in the moral efficacy of a now almost entirely vanished agrarian mode of life, in the moral virtues of the frontiersman and the husbandman; and the hallowed belief in the possibilities of a rational and benevolent democracy. This concern may be seen in the early "Ballad of Billie Potts," where the tragedy is acted out against the backdrop of the push to the West, but where there is no idealization of the pioneers, "the slush and swill of the world's great pot/That foamed at the range's lip, and spilled/Like quicksilver across green baize." The concern may also be seen in the two early novels, *Night Rider* and *At Heaven's Gate,* particularly in the former novel, in the treatment of the trapper, Willie Proudfit,

who goes West and lives among the Indians, but who finds that there is no innocence in primitivism. But I am here going to deal only with the two later novels, *All the King's Men* and *World Enough and Time.*

It would be foolish to assert that *All the King's Men* deals primarily with either the myth of the garden or the westward push of the pioneers. But the novel (which is, I think, primarily concerned with a split in the consciousness of modern man equivalent to the split between the back-to-back attitudes of idealism and cynicism) does deal with these themes; and Warren's treatment of them is consistently unsentimental and undisillusioned. The locale of the novel is hardly a garden, of either a physical or a socio-moral variety. The landscape may be described in clean, incisive, unhortatory terms.

> A hundred yards off, at the foot of the rise, there was a patch of woods, scrub oak and such. The ground must have been swampy down there, for the grass and bare ground beyond it looked too green to be natural . . . I leaned on the fence and looked off west across the country where the light was stretching out, and breathed in that dry, clean, ammoniac smell you get around stables at sunset on a summer day.

Or it may be described (all the description, of course, comes through the first person narrative of Jack Burden) in terms that are somewhat more floreate but which do not at all imply that nature is a good and benevolent force.

> A month from now, in early April, at the time when far away, outside the city, the water hyacinths would be covering every inch of bayou, lagoon, creek, and backwater, with a spiritual-mauve to obscene-purple, violent, vulgar, fleshy, solid, throttling mass of bloom over the black water, and the first heart-breaking misty green, like childhood dreams, on the old cypresses would have settled down to be leaf and not a damned thing else . . . and the insects would come boiling out of the swamp and day and night the whole air would vibrate with them with a sound like an electric fan.

Warren's attitudes toward both nature and the oftentimes supposed conflict between industrialism and agrarianism can be well seen in his treatment of the object-symbols of industrialism seen against the backdrop of nature. The paean to the internal combustion engine,

> . . . . this is the country where the age of the internal combustion engine has come into its own. Where every boy is Barney Oldfield, and the girls . . . have smooth little faces to break your heart and

> when the wind of the car's speed lifts up their hair at the temples you see the sweet little beads of perspiration nestling there . . . Where the smell of gasoline and burning brake bands and red-eye is sweeter than myrrh,

may be taken as an ironic commentary on its essential destructiveness, but such an interpretation is only likely when the reader is already committed to a set of preconceived notions about the evils of gasoline. Taken plainly, the passage is a celebration of the automobile; Warren does not suggest, as Faulkner has done, that the "Barney Oldfields" would be better off following a mule down a furrow. The girls nestling close to the dashboard have "smooth little faces" and the perspiration at their temples is "sweet."

However, generally, the automobile and other symbols of an industrial society are not so much celebrated as they are recorded, with an almost indifferent dispassionateness. This may be seen in the following description of Willie Stark's Cadillac hurtling through the night.

> We would go gusting along the slab . . . Close to the road a cow would stand knee-deep in the mist, with horns damp enough to have a pearly shine in the starlight, and would look at the black blur we were as we went whirling into the blazing corridor of light . . . . The cow would stand there knee-deep in the mist and look at the black blur and the blaze and then, not turning its head, at the place where the black blur and the blaze had been, with the remote, passive, unvindictive indifference of God-All-Mighty or Fate or me, if I were standing there knee-deep in the mist.

Nature is indifferent to the machine, for there is really no conflict between the two. Such a conflict can only possess an imagined existence in the mind of man, a conflict built up by man in an attempt to escape from the actualities of involvement in a world of men. The futility of thinking in such terms is expressively stated in the passage where Jack Burden looks from the window of the train carrying him away from the town where Willie Stark has finally discovered that he has been played for a sucker. He watches a woman fling a pan of water from a back door and as the speed of the train picks up,

> . . . . its effort seems to be through a stubborn cloying density of air as though an eel tried to swim in syrup, or the effort seems to be against an increasing and implacable magnetism of earth. You think that if the earth would twitch once, as the hide of a sleeping dog twitches, the train would be jerked over and piled up and the engine would spew and gasp . . . . But nothing happens, and

> you remember that the woman had not even looked up at the train. You forget her, and the train goes fast, and it is going fast when it crosses a little trestle. You catch the sober metallic, pure, late-light, unriffled glint of the water between the little banks, under the sky, and see the cow standing in the water upstream under the single leaning willow.

There is no conflict between woman and the machine, or between nature and the machine. The woman doesn't even look at the train and the cow stands indifferently under the trestle.

In this novel, Warren quite interestingly examines some of the implications of America's push westward. After Jack Burden discovers that Anne Stanton is Willie Stark's mistress, when his ideal of Anne is shattered, he flees West, drowns himself in the West.

> For West is where we all plan to go someday. It is where you go when the land gives out; the old-field pines encroach. It is where you go when you get the letter saying: *Flee, all is discovered.* It is where you go when you look down at the blade in your hand and see the blood on it. It is where you go when you are told that you are a bubble on the tide of empire.

Jack goes to the continent's end, to Long Beach, California, "the essence of California," so that his body might "sink down to the very bottom of West and lie in the motionless ooze of History." As he lies there, drinking and watching the flicker of a neon sign, he relives the tragic course of his love for Anne, and he realizes that he had handed her over to Willie Stark, that "my nobility (or whatever it was) had had in my world almost as direct a consequence as Cass Mastern's sin had had in his." Lying there, contemplating the results of his idealism, he bitterly tells himself, "That was why I had got into my car and headed west, because when you don't like it where you are you always go west. We have always gone west." He sees the panorama of the conquest of the continent and he experiences a disillusionment even more thoroughgoing and complete than that which Nick Carraway had felt standing on the Atlantic shore.

> . . . . after you have built cabins and cities and bridged rivers, after you have lain with women and scattered children like millet seed in a high wind, after you have composed resonant documents, made noble speeches, and bathed your arms in blood to the el-

> bows . . . . That is where you come, to lie alone on a bed in a hotel room in Long Beach, California.

It is in the West, after experiencing this disillusionment, that Jack discovers the dream of The Great Witch, which for a time is able to absolve him of his complicit guilt, but which is not the end of his knowledge. He cannot believe in the green dream of the West, which finally ends only in the neon lights of Long Beach, California; but neither can he ultimately rest in the disillusioned cynicism resulting from the withering of that dream. Finally, Jack Burden, the student of history, comes to realize that, "History is blind, but man is not," but he also comes to realize that one must accept history, one must accept the burden of the past. For if one "could not accept the past and its burden there was no future, for without one there cannot be the other, and how if you could accept the past you might hope for the future, for only out of the past can you make the future."

The action of *World Enough and Time,* as in *Brother to Dragons,* takes place in Kentucky in the early years of the nineteenth century. But it, too, is not a story of a virgin land and its virtuous husbandmen and statesmen; it is rather a tale of "pride, passion, agony, and bemused aspiration." Central Kentucky at the time of the story was not a wilderness, but it was a land on the fringe of the wilderness, and Warren suggests that the land itself might be responsible for the tragedy of Jeremiah and Rachel.

> It was a violent and lonely land . . . . The people had come here to stay, and they would stay. They would possess the wild land, but the wild land possessed them too, and in a secret, ritualistic gluttony they had eaten the heart of every savage killed at the edge of the clearing or in the ambush by the ford . . . . It was a land of the fiddle and whiskey, sweat and prayer, pride and depravity.

That land could never be classed as a garden. And Warren suggests that "perhaps the land and the history of that land devised Jeremiah Beaumont and the drama in which he played, and the scene is the action and speaks through the mouth of Jeremiah Beaumont as through a mask." However, in the end, I do not think that Warren's villain is the land, as has been stated by one critic. For, really, the land is not malevolent, it is indifferent. As Rachel stands "sweating under the hot sun, in the middle of the brutal, vibrant, tumescent land," she is aware of the land drowsing and throbbing and brooding with its own secret, but she knows that it "cared nothing for her or her secret." Essentially, the land is the same Kentucky that provided the background for *Night*

Rider. As Jeremiah realizes during his flight west with Rachel, "the land is the same, and its beauty, and is voiceless, whatever our errand, whether for wealth or peace, to open or close."

Warren quite explicitly examines and rejects the myth of the garden of primitive wilderness in this novel. After Jeremiah and Rachel are delivered from jail, they flee West, to the "last outpost in the swampy wilderness." They do not come to any wilderness eden, though, but to the swampy, malaria-ridden hangout of the river pirate band of the Grand Boz, the embodied symbol of evil and degradation. Jeremiah does find a "kind of peace" there in the wilderness, but one which he finally called the "black inwardness and womb of the quagmire."

> It was a peace with no past and no future, the absoluteness of the single, separate, dark massive moment that swells up fatly like a bubble from the deep mud, exists as a globe of slick film housing its noxious gas, then pops and is gone, and then with the regularity of the pulse of the blood, is followed by another that goes, and then another, forever.

And, just as he finds a certain peace, he also is able to find a certain kind of democracy, the democracy of the state of nature. He can sit and drink with the men of the place from the common jug which made them all the same and was "their bond and communion." He can lay with one of the women of the place and find a "surer communion with them all than he had found in the drink from the jug lipped by every mouth." He finally obtains syphillis from the woman and, looking at the sore, says, "Let me regard this canker with reverence and amaze, like a jewel fit for a royal diadem. It proclaims me one of them, and of their great descent."

Afterwards, though, on his journey back East, after his confession of "the first and last temptation, to name the idea as all, which I did, and in that error was my arrogance, and the beginning of my undoing and cold exile from man," he also admits that he had fled West "to seek communion only in the blank cup of nature, and innocence there." But Jeremiah finds that the innocence of nature can be of no avail to man.

> For I had sought innocence, and had fled into that brute wilderness where all is innocence, for all is the same in that darkness, and even the shameful canker is innocence. But that innocence is what man cannot endure and be man, and now I flee from innocence and toward my guilt, and bear my heart within me like a bleeding sore of self, as I bear the canker on my body. And if

> I can clasp my guilt, then both may become the marks of my triumph, as of my shame.

And it is Jeremiah's acceptance of his guilt, of the knowledge that "the crime for which I seek expiantion is never lost. It is always there. It is unpardonable. It is the crime of self, the crime of life. It is I" which provides a compassionately negative answer to the tortured question with which Jeremiah closes his journal and Warren closes his novel, "Oh, was I worth nothing, and my agony? Was all for naught?"

It is the absence of idealization, the refusal to romanticize and sentimentalize the past, the willingness to examine the myths which have dominated American thought throughout our nationhood, which sets Warren apart from practically all other modern American writers. Warren has examined the myth of the garden of America, the myth of the primitive innocence of America—and found the myths not only inadequate, but essentially false. In the end, Warren insists that we must return to a by now largely abandoned view of human nature (a view which is perhaps also essentially myth, but a myth not doomed to betrayal), the view that man is brother to dragons, that he is guilty of "original sin." In Willie Stark's brutal words, "Man is conceived in sin and born in corruption and he passeth from the stink of the didie to the stench of the shroud. There is always something." And, as Sweetwater says in *At Heaven's Gate,* "There's something horrible in everybody, till they work it out. It looks like a man's got to boil the pus out."

It is perhaps difficult for us to accept the essential truths of the doctrine of original sin. But perhaps it is necessary for us to do so, in order that not only our democracy, but also our particular form of civilization may survive. We can no longer continue to think of ourselves as "children of light" in a world of darkness. Reinhold Niebuhr has stated that, "The ironic elements in American history can be overcome, in short, only if American idealism comes to terms with the limits of all human striving, the fragmentariness of all historic configurations of power, and the mixture of good and evil in all human virtue." And George F. Kennan has warned us that, "A nation which excuses its own failures by the sacred untouchableness of its own habits can excuse itself into complete disaster."

Robert Penn Warren asks us to accept the conditions of our humanity, for we have, "Each, experienced what it is to be men./ We have lain on the bed and devised evil in the heart./We have stood in the sunlight and named the bad thing good and the good thing bad." It is only in such knowledge and in acceptance of the past and its burden, not in

idealizing it or rejecting it, that we can go, with Jack and Anne Burden, "out of the house and go into the convulsion of the world, out of history into history and the awful responsibility of Time."

Faulkner's Non-Fiction Prose: An Annotated Checklist[1]

HARRY RUNYAN

I. Sketches from the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* Sunday Section, Feb.-Aug., 1925:

1. "Mirrors of Chartres Street," Feb. 8, 1925, pp. 1 and 6.
2. "Damon and Pythias Unlimited," Feb. 15, 1925, p. 7.
3. "Home," Feb. 22, 1925, p. 3.
4. "Jealousy," Mar. 1, 1925.
5. "Cheest," Apr. 5, 1925, p. 4.
6. "Out of Nazareth," Apr. 12, 1925, p. 4 (illustrated by William Spratling).
7. "The Kingdom of God," Apr. 26, 1925, p. 4.
8. "The Rosary," May 3, 1925, p. 2.
9. "The Cobbler," May 10, 1925, p. 7.
10. "Chance," May 17, 1925, p. 7.
11. "Sunset," May 24, 1925, p. 4.
12. "The Kid Learns," May 31, 1925, p. 2.
13. "Episode," Aug. 16, 1925.

All but two of these sketches, Nos. 4 and 13, were reprinted in *Mirrors of Chartres Street,* with an introduction by William Van O'Connor, published by Faulkner Studies, Minneapolis, 1953, in a limited edition of 1000 copies. The other two were reprinted in *Faulkner Studies,* Vol. III, no. 4. These are mostly character sketches or embryo short stories, some in the Sherwood Anderson manner, some anticipatory of the lyricism to be found in Faulkner's later stories and novels.

II. Pieces from the *Double Dealer*:

1. "New Orleans," *The Double Dealer,* VII (Jan.-Feb., 1925), 102-107.
2. "On Criticism," *The Double Dealer,* VII (Jan.-Feb., 1925), 83-84.
3. "Verse Old and Nascent: A Pilgrimage," *The Double Dealer,* VII (Apr., 1925), 129-131.

All three pieces were reprinted in *Salmagundi,* edited with an introduction by Paul Romaine, published by The Casanova Press, Milwaukee, 1932, in a limited edition of 525 copies. "New Orleans" is a series of eleven soliloquies or monologues spoken by a cross-section of representative characters: Wealthy Jew, The Priest, Frankie and Johnny, The Sailor, The Cobbler, The Longshoreman, The Cop, The Beggar, The Artist, Magdalen, and The Tourist. All the sketches are brief philosophies of life, on the wonder of fate or chance which causes things to be different from what one

[1] [Ed. Note: Because of space limitations, it has been necessary to omit certain sections of Mr. Runyan's comprehensive listing.]

had expected or hoped for. They are insights into events which lead to acceptance. "On Criticism" and "Verse Old and Nascent: A Pilgrimage" are critical essays. The former attacks the American critic for criticizing the author instead of his writings and for injecting personalities into literary criticism. The later is partly an autobiographical sketch of Faulkner's introduction to poetry, and of the conclusions he reached after ranging from Swinburne through the moderns to Housman, and then finally back to Keats and Shelley and the Elizabethans—in whom he found a depth and beauty modern poets are incapable of achieving.

III. Introductions:

1. "Introduction" to Spratling, William, *Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles: A Gallery of Contemporary New Orleans,* published by the Pelican Bookshop, New Orleans, 1926. This is a short introduction to a book of drawings by Spratling, which Faulkner arranged. The introduction is humorous, in a naive and over-simplified Anderson manner, and Faulkner later confessed that it was a parody on Anderson's style.

2. "Introduction" to *Sanctuary,* published by The Modern Library, New York, 1932, pp. v-viii. This is the notorious introduction in which Faulkner confessed that the novel was "a cheap idea . . . deliberately conceived to make money." It also contains the well-known story of how *As I Lay Dying* was written.

3. "Foreword" to *The Faulkner Reader,* published by Random House, New York, 1954, pp. ix-xi. In this brief foreword Faulkner recalls a foreword to a novel by Sienkiewicz in which the author said that the book was written "to uplift men's hearts," and Faulkner says that that is the intention of all writing, not to improve man (although the hope for that is there, too), but for selfish personal reasons of the writer, to help him obtain a kind of immortality through being able to arouse readers even after the author is dead.

IV. Reviews:

1. "Beyond the Talking," *The New Republic,* LXVII (May 20, 1931), 23. A review of *The Road Back* by Erich Maria Remarque. Besides a number of interesting (and sardonic) comments on the nature of victory and defeat, and a number of interesting comments on the novel being reviewed, Faulkner makes a few remarks on the craft of fiction. Speaking of unnatural or inconsistent dialogue he says: "It is a writer's privilege to put into the mouths of his characters better speech than they would have been capable of, but only for the purpose of permitting and helping the character to justify himself or what he believes himself to be, taking down his spiritual pants. But when the character must express moral ideas applicable to a race, a situation, he is better kept in that untimed and unsexed background of the chorus of Greek senators." On the subject of turning reality into art he said that "authentic experience transferred to paper word for word . . . does not make a book. No matter how vivid it be, somewhere between the experience and the blank page and the pencil, it dies. Perhaps the words kill it."

2. "Folklore of the Air," *The American Mercury,* XXXVI (Nov., 1935), 370-372. A review of *Test Pilot* by Jimmy Collins. This review appeared shortly after Faulkner had finished *Pylon,* and is interesting because it sheds light on what he was trying to do in that novel. He had hoped, he said, that Collins' book would have been a "forerunner or symptom of a folklore of speed," that it would have pointed the way toward a literature of those specially trained people whose function it is to guide missiles hurtling through space—people not human in a conventional sense, but "a species and in time a race" who "in time . . . would produce a folklore." He went on whimsically to suggest, however, that because man has been able to propel objects beyond the speed of sound, perhaps the language and literature of those creatures would not be understood or even heard by the rest of us. He recognized that because such a folklore "would be years in the making," he did not really expect to find it in Collins' book or anywhere else, but he did think that the book might contain "the first fumbling precursor" of another type of folklore: one "not of the age of speed nor of the men who perform it, but of the speed itself, peopled not by anything human or even mortal but by the clever wilful machines themselves carrying nothing that was born and will have to die or which can even suffer pain, moving without comprehensible purpose toward no discernible destination, producing a literature innocent of either love or hate and of course of pity or terror, and which would be the story of the final disappearance of life from the earth."

Index to Volume III

Asterisks indicate references to bibliographical entries.

Bache, William B., "Moral Awareness in 'Dry September'," 53
Baker, Carlos, "Cry Enough," 45*
Campbell, Harry M., and Foster, Ruel S., "Communication," 40
Chametzky, Jules, "Some Remarks on *A Fable,*" 39
Dominicis, A. M., "An Interview with Faulkner," 33
Elias, Robert H., "Gavin Stevens: Intruder?" 1
Faulkner, William, "Episode," 51
———, "Jealousy," 46
Flint, R. W., "Faulkner as Elegist," 44*
Foster, Ruel E., "A Further Note on the Conclusion of 'The Bear'," 4
Goldberg, Gerald J., "Review of Carvel Collins' 'The Interior Monologues of *The Sound and the Fury,*'" 58
Goldberg, Nancy M., "Review of Lawrance Thompson's 'Mirror Analogues in *The Sound and the Fury,*'"
Goellner, Jack G., "A Closer Look at *As I Lay Dying,*" 45*
Hagopian, John V., "Review of William Van O'Connor's *The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner,*" 14
Lee, Edwy B., "A Note on the Ordonnance of *The Sound and the Fury,*" 37
Lisca, Peter, *"The Hamlet:* Gensis and Revisions," 5
Mercier, Vivian, "A Search for Universality that Led Too Far from Home," 43*
Podhoretz, Norman, "William Faulkner and the Problems of War: His Fable of Faith," 43*
Pritchett, V. S., "Time Frozen," 43*
Rosenfeld, Isaac, "On the Nobel Novelist," 45*
Runyan, Harry, "Faulkner's Non-Fiction Prose: An Annotated Checklist," 67
———, "Faulkner's Poetry," 23
Sawyer, Kenneth B., "Hero in *As I Lay Dying,*" 30
Sherwood, John C., "The Traditional Element in Faulkner," 17
White, Robert, "Robert Penn Warren and the Myth of the Garden," 59